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## STORIES OF THE IRISH PEASANTRY.

BY MRS S. C. HALL.

"Mind not high things: but condescend to men of low estate."  
ST PAUL.

### "IT'S ONLY THE BIT AND THE SUP."

A FRIEND who resides in the neighbourhood of Dublin related to me the following anecdote:—A man had lived with him for some time, a man of the name of Laurence Cassidy, who was exceedingly fond of doing as little as he could, and taking as much time as possible about that little.

"Larry," said our friend to him one morning, "Larry, you cost me a great deal of money during the year; and you are not worth the third part of what you cost."

"The Lord save us!" ejaculated Larry, casting up his eyes, "what has put the likes of that into yer honour's head?"

"Your laziness, Larry."

"Oh, my law! and I working myself to an oil every day and night of my life; and to say that to me! Well, I did not expect it from yer honour; but, in regard of the cost, yer honour, I wonder ye'd be throwing that in my face; I'm sure the thrifle I gets isn't worth the thinking of such a gentleman as yer honour."

"Trifle!" repeated Mr H—; "you may consider thirty pounds a-year a trifle, if you please; but I do not so consider it, I assure you."

"Bedad, sir, I believe you; I don't know who would; but sure all I ever got from yer honour, night or day, fresh or fasting, was a bare ten pounds—a-year, I mane."

"Ay, wages; but you cost me more than thirty pounds a-year for all that."

"Ya, then! sure it isn't the thrifle of ould clothes you throw to yer fosterers that ye're rising against me, sir, is it?"

"Not at all; what I give, I give; I should be very much ashamed of myself to calculate the ould clothes."

"See that now! Why, thin, yer honour's great in the rule of addition, any way. Will ye be pleased to insense us into it?"

"Ten pounds a-year wages," said my friend.

"Well, yer honour, I'll own to that."

"Twenty pounds, at the very least, your board."

Laurence opened his large eyes very wide, and, looking steadfastly at his master, exclaimed, "Boord, twenty pounds! Twenty pounds for the aiting and the drinking! Oh, yarra machree! whin a gentleman thinks of the bit and the sup, and it only the bit and the sup! it's all up with us! Oh, my grief! is it the bit and the sup? Well, after that! that bates Banagher! the master counting out the bit and the sup!"

Nothing could exceed Larry Cassidy's astonishment and horror that Mr H— should demean himself to think of the eating and the drinking, "the bit and the sup." "And it is always so," he said. Larry's case is by no means uncommon; they cannot comprehend the possibility of what they eat and drink being an expense. I have never found them able or willing to understand it.

I confess that my reason and my feelings have been always at war with each other on this very subject; it is impossible not to admire the frank and hearty welcome, given with the fresh warmth of Irish hospitality, the *caith mille a fauiltha*, that breathes from every lip, and sparkles in every eye. A sincere welcome to the stranger is always one of the dear and sweet remembrances that we bring from Ireland, but it has a bitter alloy when we remember that the hospitality exercised towards us, and towards others, is, strictly speaking, evidence of wrong thinking. If a man has

a shilling, and owes a shilling, there can be no question as to the fact that he has no right to spend that shilling, save in the discharge of his debt; and yet I know persons who have been hospitably entertained, drank claret and rode hunters, in houses where the dispenser of the hospitality should have eaten his humble fare in solitude, though not in sorrow, and paid his debts. This class of persons cannot in their career of reckless extravagance lay the flattering unction to their souls that they hope to mend their circumstances either by industry or exertion. They do indeed exist in the hope that somebody may die, and leave them, one knows not how much, or they may have had a promise of a place under government; upon such promises I have known dozens of young men fish and shoot, and lounge away the best hours of lives, which, in industrious England, would have come laden like bees with the honey of wealth. But the principle of this, is so deceptive, so bad, so destructive to high and low, that I am tempted to write in stronger terms upon it than many will like—I cannot help it. I confess, while exposing what I cannot but stigmatise as a dishonest hospitality, that there is a decided difference in the manner of display between the two countries; here, when the love of display beyond their means takes possession of a family, they invariably affect the possession of great riches: this is lowering the moral standard of excellence in a piteous degree; an Englishman cannot bear it to be supposed that there is any thing which he cannot afford. The Irishman laughs at his poverty, scorns it; he is a man of family, he has something better than wealth to be proud of. He will rejoice with his friends amid the ruins of his house—ruins which the too lavish gift of the "bit and the sup" has occasioned.

The English love of display is dishonest, if the tradesman suffer by it. The Irish hospitality is dishonest, if the host cannot pay his debts. There is one great difference between them—the Irish give with both hands; the English with one.

"Sure the welcome is all we have to give," said a peasant to me. "Sure it's only a potato, a lock of straw, and a sate by the sod of turf," said another. "Sure it's only my time," exclaims a third; "and, lady dear, don't be talking to us as ye would to the quality. Sure they're in debt in many parts of the country, and have the lashings of eating and drinking and company entirely; it's them yer honour ought to talk to." These last words were addressed to me by Mary Flanagan, who, with a family of five children, a blind grandmother, and a lame husband, had done her and hers the injustice of bringing in a piper, his wife and child, during a cold long winter's month, and giving them share of what they had; but the piper and his wife would be always in want, because they had acquired idle and extravagant habits, knew they were certain of support from the cottagers, and spent their money upon whisky. "I am glad to find you so rich, Mary, as to be able to keep your friends as well as your family." "Rich! oh, bedad! yer honour's always laughing at us." "Why, if you were not rich, you could not support Jim Lacy, his dirty wife, and lazy boy." "Lord! yer honour, do you call that supporting, just the bare bit and the sup?" "Have you any thing besides for yourselves?" "Augh, no; sure in decency we'd give the best bit we had to the stranger." "They have been with you just a month; and now, remember that you have spent on them what would keep your husband, mother, and child, a month; so that if at the end of the year you come asking for a month's potatoes, or a month's milk, I shall put you in mind that you reduced yourself to the disgrace of begging, and just tell you of Jim, his wife, and son.

We have no right to give what God has given us to hold in charge for others; to deny ourselves is right and righteous, but we are not given the goods of others, be it a potato or be it a pound, to bestow on whom we will." I pursued my argument still farther with Mary. "If you wanted to support the piper and his wife, Mary, you should have made them live upon the half of your own potato dinner, and not have given what was hardly sufficient for your family during the year; the consequence will be, that we shall have not only you, but the piper and his family, wanting potatoes by and bye."

"Sure the craythurs could not live on the half of my potatoes."

"But, Mary, with the prospect of your little ones starving before the expiration of the year, you had no right to give away."

"Oh," says Mary, "who knows what may turn up before the end of the year?—sure it was only the bit and the sup." Nothing, however, did turn up before the end of the year, except starvation, and Mary was obliged to ask, as we anticipated, both potatoes and milk. What made it more provoking was, that the money the piper and his wife, and even their boy, had spent in whisky, would have ensured them more comfortable fare than poor Mary Flanagan could bestow.

Floyd of Castle Floyd—I mean the last of his house, who died in C— jail about twelve years ago—inherited what had been a fine property, and was still a good one. He was a cheerful, generous, warm-hearted fellow, full of good intentions, which somehow he forgot to perform. When he came of age, an old, and by some miracle an honest lawyer, who had been his guardian, laid before him a statement of his affairs, pointing out the course by which (selling a part of his estate) he might effectually redeem and preserve the other; this would have left him about nine hundred a-year. He intended to do it. The arrangements were talked of, but not made; the advertisement for the sale of the land was absolutely written out, but not sent to the papers; when one of the hangers-on of Castle Floyd brought the young man's mind to the belief that it would be better to secure Miss Gubbins of Fort Gubbins before the sale, as her father might demur; and poor Frank Floyd had fallen desperately in love with Fanny Gubbins at an assize ball; and, moreover, she had (so said the county) great, very great—expectations. His mentor, the old lawyer, was ill in Dublin, and the young man thought there could be no harm done by putting off the business for a little time. He did so—was beguiled into returning to the open-house system, until, only until, after the wedding. The lady, who had

Brothers and sisters by dozens,  
And all charming people, they say,

fond of profusion, and either too young or too uneducated to understand its danger, persuaded her husband to wait till somebody died, for then she was sure money enough would come to pay off encumbrances. After the wedding, open house was of course kept, for the joint honour of Floyd and Gubbins; and then, somehow, Frank's prudence evaporated, and the old lawyer died, having commenced a letter to his ward, beginning, "beware of the bit and the sup."

Never did relations so multiply, full-grown ready-made relations; and when there were not beds enough to accommodate the visitors, why, they very good-naturedly put up with "shake-downs," and any shake, except the shake off. Frank had his moments of reflection, and saw this would not do; but how could he change now! After a little time, all the Floyds and all the Gubbinses were talking of the probability

of there soon being an heir to Castle Floyd; and all the relations came to wish him joy of the probability of such an event. Great preparations were made for it, and at last it came, and the pretty Fanny and her still-born child occupied the same coffin. This melancholy change removed but few of the household visitors; they all felt too much for "the poor fellow"

"To leave him alone with his sorrow."

Not having any particular faith to keep up his spirits, he took first to claret, and finding that not strong enough to quench grief, strengthened it with whisky. Hours of intense anguish succeeded to frightful fever fits.

Those who really kept open house on his means, declared society was necessary to his existence, and he believed it—believed any thing rather than bring his follies and extravagances to the stern test of thought. The fox-hunters' club always breakfasted and dined at Castle Floyd. Embarrassment was heaped on embarrassment, custodium on custodium. Every thing that could be done to raise money, he did—except rack-rent his tenants.

Still the household expenditure continued unabated until the crash came, and even then a few were not wanting to partake of his prison fare. Many circumstances, of too elaborate a nature to be unravelled in a short story, tended to hasten this catastrophe; and the eaters and the drinkers, shaken off by the strong arm of the law from their prey, set forth to strike down another quarry. This is one of the disgraceful systems so prevalent in Ireland, so totally at war with noble exertion, with that high feeling of self-dependence, that, if I had a thousand voices, I would raise them all against those who would rather eat at another's board than labour to supply their own. Poor Floyd died before he had numbered two-and-thirty years, debased in mind and prostrated in body by dissipation. Two or three only of his once numerous retinue were with him at the last. "Days!" he said, while the hectic fever, that was soon to yield to a deathlike paleness, gave an unnatural light to his eyes, and a contraction of the throat prevented his swallowing even liquids; "boys! I never refused 'the bit and the sup,' did I?"

"Oh, never," was the true reply.

"And yet it refuses me. Ah, ah! it refuses me;" and with this miserable attempt at jest and laughter, he turned on the other side and died!

Mrs Dennis Shannon kept a hosiery shop in Dame Street, Dublin; but widow though she was, and having five daughters to bring up, she loved to entertain her friends. "Sure the drawing-room was there—a beautiful room as any in the city; and the furniture—beautiful furniture; and a party was quite easy to give. She was so used to it; it was only sperm instead of mutton candles; and 'the bit and the sup,' and who'd be mane enough to grudge that, and the chance in it of getting the girls off her hands?"

"The girls," however, did not "get off," but debts "came on." The cheapness of articles of provision is a great excuse in that same city of Dublin; profuse housekeeping people seeming to forget that if things are cheaper, incomes are smaller in proportion; the "bit and the sup" given in such prodigality soon rendered Mrs Dennis Shannon not only minus her drawing-room, but minus her shop; and Betty, the last of her servants, clapt her hands and exclaimed, while tradesmen remained unpaid, and "the girls," brought up in thoughtless extravagance, were billeted upon every Shannon that had a house, "Augh, then, more's the pity!—she never begrudged the 'bit or the sup.'" These are extreme cases, but no one acquainted with Ireland can say that such are of rare occurrence. Thoughtless and fond of amusement, fond of giving, fond of all things liberal, the silent, unobtrusive, even stream of justice is overlapped, and, unfortunately, when a person above the very poorest class falls, he does not fall alone.

"I have been visiting your country," said an English gentleman to me the other morning. "I have spent three months at Ballyray in the most delightful manner. Capital snipe-shooting, capital trout-fishing, and lots of good things."

I was greatly astonished, for I know the proprietor of Ballyray owed the Englishman a sum of money which I suspected he could never pay.

"Indeed! Well, and did you succeed in your mission?"

"No, I cannot say I did," he answered laughing. "Myself, and horse, and servant, I believe all my family, could have lived board and lodging free all the days of our lives at Ballyray; but as to money, they

have none to give. They are talking of levying fines; so I suppose I shall have some chance, as it is really a noble property. I could not press the matter. Besides," he added, after a little hesitation, "the gentleman's eldest son always calls any one out who asks for money in real earnest, that is, if the debt is considerable."

"And if it is not considerable?"

"Why, then, I believe the servants drag the creditor through the lake—the little lake, not the great one."

God forbid that I should wish people not to help each other; it is one of the privileges of our existence to do so; but the helper should not be expected both to set the machine in motion and keep it going. We all can do something in the great and ennobling labour of independence.

I could fill volumes with the effects of the reckless generosity of those even within a limited sphere, whom I have known and loved. The experience of a few years has shown me so much of the ruin of this system, or rather no system, that I have been severe both with my precepts and examples. I wish to be true in this matter, but unfortunately truth says more than I have ventured to repeat.

There are many Irish persons of good sense who have argued with me, that if a rich relation can afford to support a poor one, he ought to do so; granted, if the poor relation be incapacitated by mental or bodily indisposition from labour; but, otherwise, he does him a severe moral injury to support him without calling his energies into action. The wise man (I hate the word patron; there should be no such words as patron or pauper in an English vocabulary); the wise man will, if he has the means, place his poor relations on the high road to independence, cheer and comfort them on their way, and give them occasionally a helping hand; but he will not do his own flesh and blood to the degradation of dependence.

The person who in a higher grade of society distributes the "bit and the sup" till he has not a "bit or a sup" left for himself, wrongs those who furnish his supplies. The poor cottager must not persuade himself, that if he gives his own and his children's food to the poor traveller, he wrongs none but his own. Society is so constituted that we cannot wrong only ourselves; "those who give all give none." When Mary Flanagan supported the piper, his wife, and child, for a month, having barely enough to feed her own family until the potatoes came in, she created beggary. It is not for me to point out to the legislature how this system might be changed as regards the peasantry. Something will, I trust, be done, and soon; but I want the peasantry to help themselves. I have seen amongst the Irish peasants instances of self-sacrifice, devoted attachment, elevated and generous affection, that would add laurels to any wreath of national glory. It is because I love them dearly, that I would remove the incrustations of the diamond; I want to make them think and reason.

I said all this and more about three years ago to Jenny Jeffers, who loved to hear her country praised; pretty Jenny Jeffers, who had had twenty pounds and a cottage, a little land, three acres, well stocked, left her by her uncle Bob, who died just when I think he ought to have lived; for poor Jenny was in love with her cousin, "Jumping Jeffers," as he was called, of Ballymore; and her uncle Bob had resolved that Jumping Jeffers should never have a farthing of his money. But what are a dead man's resolves against a living woman's love?

"Sorra a wildness in him that I know of, except that he'd give the last bit and sup he had in the world to a neighbour," she said; "and that was what turned my uncle Bob against him; 'for,' says he, 'Jenny, avourneen, he has no head.' But he has a heart any how, my lady."

"An Irishman's heart may be as stout as a shillala, Jenny, but, after all, it's a poor stock in trade for the wants of the world."

"Oh, sure, I've the twenty pounds-a-most to the good, to say nothing of the house and farm."

"And your cousin?"

"Oh, sure, he has —" Jenny paused.

"What, Jenny?"

"Himself, then, and what he stands upright in, sorra more!" said Jenny, stooping to look for a "lucky pin" she said she had dropped.

"That's not a great deal, Jenny."

"But, sure, my lady, I have a good share of every thing. Praise be to God for it."

"Well, so you have, Jenny, an excellent commencement, and good to keep on with, also; but my great objection to Jeffers is, the quantity of poor relations that besiege him—folk that are not your blood relations at all."

"His mother's people," said Jenny, "and that's three for ye, my lady. He has, God help him! a round score, neither able nor willing to do a hand's turn for themselves. More's the shame and the pity! Wild, rollicking craythurs they are, getting into serapes; but sorra more harm than that in them."

It was of no use for me to argue with Jenny. "When a woman, and an Irish woman especially, takes it into her head to walk deliberately into love's quagmire, why, you may talk to her, and reason with her, but she will not change her mind. If she falls into a passion, you have some chance from the reaction; but if she reasons with you, as Jenny did with me, she is resolved."

"Jumping Jeffers" was married to Jenny, and the sweets of an imprudent honeymoon left their usual proportion of bitterness. A good deal of the twenty pounds was spent in distributing the bit and the sup to "his mother's people;" and, under the generosity of the profusion, there frequently runs an under-current of love of praise, which stimulates persons not high minded enough for liberality to a reckless extravagance. This was the case with Jeffers; he liked to be thought a slashing, liberal, careless fellow, and he certainly had his desire amongst his own class; his superiors considered him in a different and dangerous light. Time passed on; there was not a Sunday that the "bit and the sup" was not dispensed with a too liberal hand; the drop, also, was too frequent and too strong; and the consequence was, that the pretty quiet cottage of poor Jenny had become occasionally the scene of midnight outrage. This was very distressing to her. She saw the little she had, squandered by a thoughtless unfeeling husband, and the property melting, as it were, away from them. She was too Irish to refuse "the bit and the sup," and she was likely to be left without a home.

There is no country in the world where retrenchment is so difficult as in Ireland; they sacrifice not only their future means of giving, but their future means of living, to the desire of affording present enjoyment to each other. Jenny, urged by her respectable friends, tried to stem the torrent, but she ought to have avoided entering the stream.

"It's only Bill Casey and the two boys of the Ban, Jenny," her husband would say to her remonstrance. "You can't refuse them the 'bit and the sup,' and they come so far! Don't let us disgrace ourselves before decent people by having nothing to give, Jenny; bring out the long bottle, achora! Do!"

"I can't—I cannot; it's no use now; lave me alone; just say you haven't got it. Sure you know our last guinea's upon the go, and not a seed in the ground yet. My goodness! how can you behave so! It's no use, I tell you again! Now, be quiet—we'll be ruined all out; you haven't done a hand's turn at the farm, and there'll be nothing to pay the rent, small as it is, the way you're going!"

This difference of opinion ended as usual; the husband had his way; and, truly, when "gale-day" came, there was nothing to pay the rent. The neighbours said how it would be; but Jeffers had still "the bit and the sup" to give, though Jenny went without stockings during the week, and her pleasant cheerful voice was now seldom heard in song or laughter. The next rent-day arrived, and the same story was told to a landlord who had hitherto been just and kind. Landlords are too often the contrary, but this man was poor, and could not do without his money. When tenants refuse to pay rent for the advantages they enjoy, they ought to consider how utterly impossible it is for their landlords to exist without money, and remember that they themselves expect to be paid for the butter, fowls, eggs, and corn, they take to market. Jeffers, however, could not pay; his wife's money had been squandered, and he had neglected their little crops for the sake of amusement; his landlord's expostulations were, in his wife's absence, returned by insolence; his landlord threatened, what his tenant dared him to perform. When Jenny entered, she found her husband half mad with whisky and rage; he had good reason to believe his landlord would distrain, and had sent for Bill Casey and his companions to prevent it. Poor Jenny, finding she could not turn her husband's purpose, and knowing how he had exasperated his landlord, resolved to appeal to the generosity of an aunt, who lived at some distance, in this time of peril, and set forth in a state of agitation better imagined than described, having first prevailed upon a female friend to remain in the house during her absence, to prevent every thing in it from being destroyed. "He'll give the 'bit and sup' to the last," she said, as distinctly as she could speak for tears; "and if you don't watch, Aileen, the dresser from the wall, and the bedstead from under us, will be sold for that same."

Poor Jenny entreated them all to be patient till her return, but she might as well have expected patience from a March whirlwind; they had been so long accustomed to lawless deeds, that they were much better pleased with the prospect of the landlord's putting his threat into execution, than with the hope of his forbearing altogether.

Jenny, poor Jenny, had a long and weary journey. She had endeavoured, before she set out, to see her landlord, but he was from home, and perhaps for the first time in her life she did not squander her time. Her aunt was old, and cross, and fractious, yet she obtained her desire, and turned towards home with an anxious heart, but many good resolves in case of her husband's persisting in his ill conduct. She had been offered a home with her aunt; but, in truth, the constant-hearted woman prayed more earnestly for his reform than for her own release. She had journeyed the greater part of the night; but when she arrived at the end of the bobraen that led to her cottage, although it was the very earliest morning, sounds of tumult struck upon her ear, and she flew rather than ran towards her cottage. When she came in sight of "the lawn," she beheld a scene of confusion too frequently witnessed in Ireland—the

\* Rent-day.



landlord was attempting to fulfil his threat, and had been resisted.

One violence brought on another; the police had, it would appear, seized a couple of pigs, which, by an ingenious device of Jeffers, had been placed in his sty to mislead the agents of the law. A scuffle had ensued; her husband was struggling on the ground with two of the men; and her friend, whom she had left to keep peace and preserve order, was whirling stones from her apron upon the assailants, in a way that left no doubt of her intention.

The half-suffocated screams of her husband urged her to phrenzy. Impelled by an impulse she had no time to reason with, or strength to resist, she flew to his rescue, seized a wattle that lay in her path, and succeeded in drawing off the attention of one of the men from her husband. Jeffers took immediate advantage of this rescue, and rallied with his friends, so as to be able to make a retreat, which ended in flight; but one of the bailiffs was so severely injured that his life was despaired of. Poor Jenny and her friend were carried to the county jail, amid the tears of her acquaintances, who, but for her earnest and well-managed entreaties that they would keep the peace, and commit no second outrage, would most certainly have rescued her. The man who had been so severely beaten by Jeffers died, but his companions bore testimony to his having received the injuries which caused his death, before the women interfered in the least with the fray, and certainly before Jenny's arrival at the scene of contest. The verdict returned was one of murder against Jeffers and Bill Casey. Poor Jenny endeavoured to support her friend's spirits and her own. The latter were considerably relieved by the information, secretly given, that her unfortunate husband had escaped from the country, though the bitterness of heart she experienced in the knowledge that he had left her without one love token, one kind message, after all she had done and suffered for his sake, was hard to bear. If it had only been "a God be with you, agra, or a lock of his hair; and he gone for ever from the sight of my eyes; though I pray that God may pity him as I do. And he may be at this moment tossing on the wide ocean, with the fresh air of heaven about his head, and the free waters of the Almighty rolling him to a free country; while I'm here, my heart crushed in my body, between the hard walls of a jail. Oh! it's hard to bear, it's hard to bear; sure I couldn't stand to see him murderin', and he my husband. I couldn't stand that, any how; and how'll my people ever stand the disgrace!—and all that he, poor fellow, gave the *bit and the sup* to with both hands, scattered by the law and their own devilment. Oh, my grief! But keep a good heart, *arourneen*; you shan't be worse off than me, that you shan't, and the day will soon come, and be soon gone too. God tache us the right way!"

There was something in Jenny's uniform good intentions, though she had failed to carry them into action, in her fond yet foolish attachment to her worthless husband, that interested us all in her behalf; and greatly pleased were we to hear a fine of a few pounds, with the alternative of three months' imprisonment, named as her punishment, for we knew that she could easily contrive to raise the money. A morning or two after the termination of the assizes, we accompanied some friends to visit the jail, and to our great astonishment, there, in the female ward, was Jenny, spinning away, her black hair braided back neatly as usual, and her aspect more composed, more calm, than we had seen it for months.

"Why, Jenny, how is this? We thought you had gone to your aunt's."

"Thank ye, madam," she answered; "but my people's very angry with me—very angry with me intirely; and when my time's up here, I'm thinking I'll have to go to sarvice, for indeed I shouldn't be able to go begging for the 'bit and the sup,' though many begged it from me. I might have kept it to be sure; but all we can do with *spilt milk*, is to cry over it, my lady."

"And not spill it again, Jenny."

"Bedad, ma'am," said Jenny smiling, "it's great luck entirely we must have to win the chance of spilling it twice!"

"But, Jenny, how came you here now? Surely if you could not raise enough to pay the fine on your own place, your friends would do it for you."

"As to my poor little place, it's altogether gone to the bad; and sure my people did raise it, God bless them!"

"And why are you here?"

"Ah, ma'am, that's a bird of fresh feathers. You see, my lady, that misfortunate morning I warned poor Ailey to take care of the dresser and the bits of things; and that drew her into the ruction, poor craythur; and sure, ever since she's been here, on my account as a body may say, there's been no child's hand to give a drink of water to her ould mother, or look after any thing in their little house; so, my lady, I paid her ransom instead of my own. She's gone free to her mother, God be praised! and though my aunt's mad with me, I have their blessing, and the knowledge that I did right—to strengthen me against the trouble."

The noble-hearted woman deserved the strength her self-sacrifice created; and though, before our converse had finished, she bowed down her head and wept bitterly as she said herself over the "spilt milk," and, above all, at the remembrance of her husband's heart-

less conduct, still her tears were not those of despair, though her own folly will oblige her to trust to that charity which she squandered. If she had learnt the wise lesson of withholding judiciously, she might still have had the "BIT AND THE SUP" to share with those who really needed.

#### AGE AND SIZE OF TREES.

WITHIN the last three or four years, several works of great merit have been published in America and France, in which the age and size of trees have been discussed in a very philosophical manner. M. Decandolle, the greatest botanist in Europe, as far as the physiology of plants is concerned, has given to the world an elaborate and profound paper, entitled "The Antiquity of Trees." In this valuable contribution to science, the author has embodied the results of many years' investigation of the subject, and some of them are of such a nature as to startle us not a little. When, for instance, we are told, that, by calculations which are at all events made on ingenious and plausible principles, there is every reason for believing in the existence of trees that were contemporaries of the first generations of men, and probably witnesses of the last great changes of the globe which preceded the creation of the human race, our curiosity is excited in the liveliest manner to know by what mode of observation and process of reasoning philosophers arrive at such extraordinary conclusions. It is simply by counting the concentric circles in trees. This method of computation is not admitted by all botanists; but if those trees, called by Decandolle *exogenous*, form annually an external woody deposit, which is distinctly marked in the timber like a ring, and which remains indelible, and if this process is regularly continued from year to year without interruption or failure, then we can see no reasonable objection to it. The number of these concentric circles seen on a horizontal section of a trunk will inform us how long a tree has lived, as a section of a branch gives us the age of that branch. "This method," says our author, "is not liable to much error, and is a simple criterion to ascertain the age of a tree; but the inspection of these concentric circles must be made with the greatest care. By their number they give the age, and the degree of their thickness gives also the rate of their increase; therefore they should be measured as well as counted. My plan is as follows: When I have got a section of an old tree, on which I can see the circles, I place a sheet of paper upon it, extending from the centre to the circumference. On this paper I mark every circle, showing also the situation of the pith, the bark, the name of the tree, the country where it grew, and any other necessary observations. I also mark in a stronger manner, the lines which indicate every ten years, and thus I measure their growth at ten years' intervals. Measuring from centre to circumference gives me the circles, doubling this I have the diameter, and multiplying by six I have the circumference."

The learned professor then presents a table of the periods of increase in the diameter of various trees; an inspection of which proves that every tree, after having grown rapidly when young, seems at a certain age to take a regular march of growth, which may perhaps be accounted for by supposing that young trees have more room to expand in, are less pressed by the roots and branches of their neighbours, and may not have penetrated down to a hard, arid, or otherwise unfavourable soil; and also, that as trees advance in age, they still continue to form layers as thick as they previously did subsequently to the period of rapid growth. If such tables were multiplied to a sufficient extent, as we have no doubt they will be in course of time, they would form data from which, by ascertaining the circumference of a tree, its age might be known without having recourse to the destructive process of cutting deep into the growing timber. "If," says Decandolle, "one cannot get a transverse section of a trunk, then one must seek for old specimens of each kind, the date of whose planting is known, measure their circumference, deduce their average growth, and calculate from them the age of other trees of the same kind, always keeping in mind that young trees grow faster than old ones." Decandolle cites instances of trees whose ages have been ascertained according to the rule here laid down. Some of these we shall present to the reader, along with descriptions of other trees obtained from a variety of sources, particularly American publications.

A certain *Baobab* tree of Africa is considered by Humboldt as the oldest organic monument of our planet; and Adanson, a distinguished botanist, by ingenious calculations, has ascertained its age to be 5150 years. The method adopted by Adanson for finding its age, was by making a deep cut in the side of the trunk, and counting the concentric rings, by which he ascertained how much the tree had grown in three centuries; and having already learned the growth of young trees, he established his general law through the average growth. The enormous dimensions of the trunk of this tree bear a striking disproportion to the other parts. Examples of the species

have been seen, which, with a trunk ninety feet in circumference, were only twelve feet in height. A still larger was seen by Mr Golberry in the valley of the two Gagnacks in Africa; it was thirty-four feet in diameter. The flower is of the same gigantic proportions as the tree. Such colossal masses of timber might be hollowed out into by no means straitened dwelling-houses.

One of the most celebrated trees described by travellers of recent times, is the *Great Dragon tree* of the island of Teneriffe. It derives its name of *dragon's-blood*, by which it is popularly known, from the circumstance of a liquor of a deep red colour like blood flowing from its hoary trunk during the dog-days. This exudation soon becomes dry and brittle by the action of the atmosphere, and is the true *dragon's-blood* of the apothecaries, and other vendors. The wonderful size and appearance of this tree excited the admiration of Humboldt, who thus describes it:—"We were told that the trunk of this tree, which is mentioned in some very ancient documents as marking the boundaries of a field, was as gigantic in the fifteenth century as it is at the present moment. Its height appeared to us to be about fifty or sixty feet; its circumference near the roots is forty-five feet." The trunk is divided into a great number of branches, which rise in the form of a candelabrum, and are terminated by tufts of leaves, like the *yucca* which adorns the valley of Mexico. It still bears, every year, both leaves and fruit. Its aspect feelingly recalls to mind 'that eternal youth of nature' which is an inexhaustible source of motion and of life." This giant plant was laid prostrate by a tempest in 1822.

The fact here noticed by the learned traveller, that the tree annually bore leaves and fruit, affords indubitable proof of a very remarkable circumstance connected with the vegetable kingdom. In man and all other animals, we find an organisation and a process of life going on which is destined to cease at a certain period. Mortality is written in irrevocable characters on every thing which treads the earth, or wings the air, or cleaves the flood. Life in these, is like sand in the hour-glass; its very motion, so to speak, involves the necessity of its becoming exhausted at last, and ceasing to move. But it is otherwise with trees. They appear to possess the power of growing on for ever without exhibiting any symptoms of decay, unless from accidental or extraneous causes. We shall quote the words of Decandolle on this point. "As there is formed every year a ligneous deposit, and generally new organs, there is not among the vegetable creation place for that hardness or rigidity, that obstruction of old and permanent organs, which constitutes properly the death of old age, and, consequently, that being the case, trees can only die from accidental causes. Trees do not die from age in the true sense of the word; they have no fixed period of existence; and, consequently, some may be found that have arrived at an extraordinary age." But although a tree thus possesses in itself the elements of continual strength and youth, numerous causes step in to interrupt or destroy its existence. In corroboration of what we state, we need only allude to the facts, that soil is of limited depth—that, below the soil, there are usually hard strata, which the feelers of a plant cannot penetrate—that roots intercrossing encumber each other, and check vegetation—besides which, there are other destructive and obstructive causes which we need not occupy the reader's time by specifying. Consequently, although what the French philosopher says is quite true, that "some (trees) may be found that have arrived at an extraordinary age," yet, every circumstance considered, we are not to be surprised if the number found should prove exceedingly small, compared with the immense extent of the earth's surface which is covered with forest trees.

Cypresses of gigantic dimensions are met with in Mexico. At *Aleto* there is one seventy-six feet in girth; and another at *St Maria del Tuli*, in the province of Oaxaca, which is one hundred and eighteen feet in circumference! This is larger than the dragon tree of the Canaries, and all the baobabs of Africa. "But," says Humboldt, "on examining it narrowly, M. Anza observes, that what excites the admiration of travellers is not a single individual, but that three united trunks form the famous *Sabino* of *Santa Maria del Tuli*." The fact of the threefold nature of the stem, seems to have escaped the notice of some writers; it is of importance in determining which is really the largest organic monument of our planet. There is another cypress at *Chapultepec* in the same region, which is said to be one hundred and seventeen feet ten inches round, and the younger Decandolle considers it even older than the baobab of Adanson. If the measurement here given be correct, and the tree consists only of one stem, we are entitled to regard this Mexican cypress as the most gigantic and ancient tree hitherto discovered on the globe. Hunter says that in 1776 there existed in the garden of the palace of Grenada, cypresses that were celebrated even in the time of the Moorish kings, and which were named *Cypresses de la Reyna Sultana*, from a sultana who was seen sitting under it with a lover, who was one of the Abencerrages. They are supposed to be eight or nine hundred years old. Strabo mentions a Persian cypress in girth as much as five men could span, and he believed it to be two thousand five hundred years old. But this must have been guess-work; at least we are not aware that he made the computation after the skillful manner of Adanson or Decandolle. Mi-

chaux, a Frenchman, has published a splendid work on the forest trees of the United States. He says that the largest stocks of the cypress are one hundred and twenty feet in height, and from twenty-five to forty feet in circumference, above the conical base, which at the surface of the earth is always three or four times as large as the continued diameter of the trunk. Cypresses are among the trees in the south of Europe which live to the most advanced age; and the custom of planting them in cemeteries and consecrated ground, ensures respect being paid to them, and thus affords botanists the means of measuring them.

The Oaks are amongst the patriarchs of Europe, but they have been treated at sufficient length on former occasions. Yews are believed to be the most ancient trees of Great Britain; and no doubt can exist that there are individuals of the species in England as old as the introduction of Christianity, and there is every reason to believe a very great deal older. It is the opinion of Decandolle, that of all European trees the yew is that which attains the greatest age. "I have measured the deposits of one of seventy years; Gelhafen has measured one of one hundred and fifty years; and Veillard has measured one of two hundred and eighty years. These three measurements agree in proving that the yew grows a little more than one line annually in the first one hundred and fifty years, and less than a line from one hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty. If for very aged yews we take the average of one line annually, it is probably an admission beyond the truth; and thus in estimating the number of lines and years as equal, we make them younger than they really are." We think this reasoning very plausible, and point out to such of our readers as may have opportunities of seeing old yew trees, how easily they may ascertain their age.\* The line here spoken of is one-tenth of an inch. The circumference may be taken just above the base of the tree; the third of this measurement gives the diameter, and every inch of diameter is equal to ten years. There are four measurements of venerable yews in England—those of the ancient Abbey of Fountains, near Ripon in Yorkshire, which yews were well known as early as 1155. Pennant says that in 1770 they were 1214 lines in diameter, and, consequently, were more than twelve centuries old. Those of the churchyard of Crowhurst in Surrey, on Evelyn's authority, were 1287 lines in diameter. There are two remarkable yews still in the same cemetery, and if they be the same which Evelyn refers to, they must be fourteen centuries and a half old. The yew tree at Fortingal in Perthshire, mentioned by Pennant, in 1770 had a diameter of 2588 lines, and, consequently, we must reckon it at from twenty-five to twenty-six centuries old. The yew of Brabourne churchyard in Kent has attained the age of 3000 years; but that at Hedor in Bucks surpasses all others in magnitude and antiquity. It is in full health, and measures above twenty-seven feet in diameter; consequently, according to Decandolle's method of computation, this yew has reached the enormous age of 3240 years! In all likelihood this is the most ancient specimen of European vegetation.

The Elm attains a very large size, and has a very rapid growth, both in Europe and America; but the elm of the latter country has a much more majestic appearance than that of Europe. Michaux characterises it as "the most magnificent vegetable of the temperate zone." A specimen mentioned by Decandolle, which grew near the town of Morges in Switzerland, measured seventeen feet seven inches in diameter, and was estimated at three hundred and thirty-five years of age. He informs us that it grew on an average three lines and a half yearly; but dividing its growth each century, it grew six lines annually the first, two and a half the second, and two and three-fourths the third; and this growth agrees with that of those elms planted by order of Sully before the Chambers in France. Every one who has it in his power to ascertain the rate of growth of trees, ought to do so, as he is thereby not only gratifying a rational curiosity, but conferring a benefit on science. Wherever the age of an elm or other tree is correctly known, its girth should be taken, and a plain statement of the species of tree, the nature of the soil where it grew, its diameter and age, transmitted to any journal, the special object of which is to take cognisance of the vegetable kingdom. We are certain that hundreds of our readers have this in their power. Indeed, Decandolle earnestly solicits the attention of English botanists to the subject; for it is only by an extensive accumulation of individual facts that general laws can be established.

One of the most curious and beautiful of nature's productions, is the Banian or Burr tree, the *Ficus Indica* of botanists. Each tree forms in itself a grove, composed of numerous stems connected together, some of which are of the size of a large tree. On the island of Nerbuddah, near Baroach, in Hindostan, there is still standing a celebrated banian, called the *Cutbeer Burr*. The tradition of the natives is, that it is three thousand years old. It is supposed by some to be the same tree that was visited by Nearehus, one of Alex-

ander the Great's officers. The large trunks of this tree amount in number to 350, the smaller ones exceed 3000, and each of these is constantly sending forth branches and hanging roots to form other trunks. The circumference of this remarkable plant is nearly 2000 feet. Milton, in his "Paradise Lost," has described one of these trees as that of whose leaves our first parents "made themselves aprons" after the fall.

"Soon they chose  
The fig-tree, not that kind for fruit renowned,  
But such as at this day, to Indians known,  
In Malabar or Decan, spreads her arms,  
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground  
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow  
About the mother-tree, a pillar'd shade  
High over-arched, and echoing walks between."

The Lime is the European tree which, in a given time, appears capable of acquiring the largest diameter. Decandolle has some observations on the rate of growth of this tree, which may prove useful. He says, "That which was planted at Fribourg in 1476, on occasion of the battle of Morat, has now a diameter of 13 feet 9 inches, which would give about two lines of annual diametric growth. This is about the rate of the increase of the growth of an oak, and therefore, I suppose, the tree had not found a favourable soil, and it would be nearer the truth to calculate the annual growth of the lime at four lines. There are in Europe a great number of limes of large size, and it would be interesting to have the circumference of those whose date is known. I shall mention for their size that of the Chateau de Chailly, near Melles, in the department of the Deux Sèvres, which in 1804 measured 15 metres round (about 50 feet), and which I suppose was then five hundred and thirty-eight years old; that of Trous in the Grisons, already celebrated in 1424, which in 1798 measured 51 feet in circumference, and which I calculate to be five hundred and eighty-three years old; that of Depeham, near Norwich, which in 1664 was 8½ yards in circumference; and that of Henstadt in Wurtemberg, which in 1550 was so large as to have need of props, and which in 1664 was 37 feet 4 inches in circumference. One must distinguish between the large and small leaved limes, as the former appear to grow faster than the latter." There appears to be a mistake in regard to the Depeham lime. We suspect it is the same mentioned by Sir Thomas Browne, which he says was 90 feet in height, and 48 feet round at a foot and a half from the ground. He also describes a poplar near Harling as of nearly the same dimensions. The largest now known in England grows in Moor Park, Herts.

The Oriental Plane is one of those trees which attain the largest size, but the rate of its increase is not ascertained. In the valley of Bujukdéré, about three leagues from Constantinople, there is a plane which recalls to mind one which Pliny has celebrated. According to the Roman naturalist, there was a plane-tree in Lycia, which had a hollow trunk capacious enough to accommodate the consul Licinius Mutianus and eighteen followers, who found within its ample cavity a retreat for the night. This living vegetable grotto was 75 feet in circumference, and the summit of the tree resembled a small forest. The plane at Constantinople is 150 feet round, and within it there is a cavity of 80 feet in circumference. This transcends the tree of Pliny. There are other very large oriental planes mentioned by Clark and others, and one of vast size was lately noticed by Mr Quin in his voyage down the Danube. For the information of our readers, we may mention that in the eastern states of the North American Union, this tree is called Button-wood, and in the western states Sycamore. Under the latter appellation, Mr Flint, the distinguished geographer, styles it "the king of the western forests. It is the largest tree of our woods, and rises in the most graceful forms, with vast spreading lateral branches, covered with bark of a brilliant white. A tree of this kind near Marietta (Ohio) measured 15½ feet in diameter. We have seen one on the Big Miami (a river), which we thought still larger. Judge Tucker of Missouri cut off a section of a hollow trunk of a sycamore, and applied a roof to it, and fitted it up as a study. It was regularly cylindrical, and when furnished with a stove and other arrangements, made an ample and convenient apartment." But buildings of a more extensive description than the above have been constructed out of this tree. We learn that a hollow trunk of an enormous sycamore was fitted up with the requisite appendages, and made use of at Utica in New York state as a retail shop; and it was afterwards carried to the city of New York for a show. We extract from the *New York Traveller* the following notice of such another extraordinary domicile, or in all likelihood the same as that made use of at Utica. It was exhibited in the saloon of the American Museum in New York. "A sycamore tree of most singular and extraordinary size has been brought to this city from the western part of this state. The interior is hollowed out, and will comfortably accommodate some forty or fifty persons. It is splendidly furnished as a sitting-room, and contains every article of elegance and usefulness. It has a handsome piano, sofas, glasses, and mirrors, of fit and becoming style, and is decorated with pictures and fancy articles." The reader is not to class this account with the many incredible transatlantic stories which are imported into this country. We have no reason to doubt the fact; but it seems quite clear that the apartments must have been hollowed out of the tree lengthways, its diameter affording sufficient height for them.

There are still some trees of a very remarkable size or age which remain to be described, but we can only briefly notice the most celebrated of them. In the Garden of Olives at Jerusalem there are now existing eight olives, which can be proved by historical documents to have existed anterior to the taking of Jerusalem by the Turks, and which consequently must be at least 800 years old. A writer in the North American Review remarks, that the largest oak, and indeed the largest tree he has seen in that country, is an oak about twenty-seven feet in circumference at the smallest part. Its age he computes at not less than 500 years, so that it must have been a majestic tree at the time when Columbus discovered the western world. We wish he had told us its girth immediately above the base, but it is quite clear that this oak must be a stupendous organic fabric.

In 1804, Decandolle saw at Gizean, near Montpellier, in France, an ivy, the trunk of which near the base was six feet round, and whose immensity, he says, was truly astonishing. Another ivy, only forty-five years old, was only seven and a half inches round; so, taking it as a general type, the specimen at Gizean in the year 1804, ought to have been of the age of 435 years. We have nowhere seen mentioned an ivy of such colossal dimensions. A writer in the North American Review mentions wild grape vines of enormous size. He says that, whilst in the eastern states, and, we may add, in Europe, it "rarely grows larger than a stout walking-stick, in our western states it sometimes surpasses, in diameter, the body of a full-grown man. This fact we have verified by actual measurement."

Amongst the largest flowers, are those of an *Aristolochia* of South America, which are four feet round: the Indian boys, in their sports, draw them over their heads as a cowl. Probably the largest flower-cup in the world is that of the *Rafflesia* of Sumatra, in the East Indian seas, which is nearly three feet in diameter, and weighs fourteen pounds. The largest leaf is that of the *Talipot*, which has been measured, and found eleven feet in length, and sixteen in breadth. It was used as a parasol, and screened six persons at table.

#### MR ROBERTS'S EXCURSION—SECOND LETTER.

IN our 375th Number we took the liberty of reprinting, from the *Athenaeum*, a letter from Mr D. Roberts, descriptive of his professional tour in Egypt, and dated Cairo, the 24th of December. We have now the satisfaction of offering a second letter from that gentleman, dated St Jean d'Acre, April 25, 1839, which has been lately received by one of his friends in this city, through whose kindness we have been favoured with a copy for publication. Being descriptive of Mr Roberts's movements through a region of singular natural features, and full of the most extraordinary remains of antiquity, it cannot fail to prove interesting to our readers.

"My dear —, I take the earliest opportunity—that of a rainy day, sitting under my tent opposite the celebrated St Jean d'Acre, and who knows but on the same spot which *Cœur de Lion* himself may have occupied under similar circumstances—of letting you know that here I am thus far on my way homewards, after a journey of nearly three months through the Desert and Syria, and in as good health as I ever enjoyed in my life. I look forward to reaching England in two months more, fully prepared to do something desperate in the way of art, or at all events to make the best possible use of the great variety of materials which I have collected for the purpose. But to the narrative of my wanderings: After my return from Upper Egypt and Nubia, I passed six weeks in Cairo, partly in taking sketches of its mosques and bazaars, and partly in preparing for my journey across the Desert. An English gentleman and I having arranged to visit Petra together, we were joined by a countryman whom you know, Mr —, from Edinburgh; he happened to be in Cairo at the time, and having a few weeks to spare, joined us, making altogether a party strong enough to face any band of Arabs from the Desert of Suez to India. On the 8th of February, having entered into an arrangement with the sheik or chief of a powerful tribe of Arabs, we left Cairo for Mount Sinai, with a caravan of twenty-one camels. These animals were designed for carrying our tents, provisions, and even water for our journey, as far as the head of the Gulf of Akaba, on the Red Sea, that being the boundary to which the tribe could go. Only fancy your humble servant, dressed and armed with sword and pistols, like a respectable Mussulman, and seated on a dromedary, issuing from the gates of Cairo, in the midst of a wild-looking cavalcade of camels and Arabs; and if you can, it will not make a bad sketch. Our first night's encampment in the Desert was any thing but agreeable, but the second was much worse. Before we could get up our tents, one of those dreadful storms overtook us, which are only to be seen in those latitudes—the thunder rolled and the rain fell in torrents for two hours, whilst the hurricane, I thought, would have swept every thing before it. To have had an opportunity of creeping under the belly of a camel would have been a luxury, but this was a situation I could not attain; I had to hold on by the poles of the tent, and keep a look-out after the portmanteaus and eatables, all of which, of course, were completely deluged. The night, you may be assured, was miserable enough; next day, however, the sun rose as usual in his eastern splendour, and all was forgotten;

\* We are aware that at the British Association, which met in 1836, a paper was read contradictory of Decandolle's computation regarding yew trees, and stating that he made the old trees too young, and the young trees too old. The experimenter asserted that the mean average of the number of lines which a tree increased in a year, was two, or one-fifth of an inch. But Decandolle is the highest authority, and we are inclined to abide by his opinion till further experiments have been made.



and now I am so much at home in this sort of life, that it will be some time before I get reconciled to sleep within four walls. It is certainly the most independent way of living that I can imagine—no bills to pay—no waiters waiting for a gratuity—by daybreak the tents are struck, and the camels loaded, and then we are on our way for new places of interest.

In three days we crossed the Isthmus of Suez, and there being little to be seen in this miserable place, we pushed on towards the Great Desert or wilderness of Sinai. Our route here lay through the same wild mountains which were traversed by the Israelites in their flight from Egypt, leaving on our right that portion of the Red Sea which they so miraculously crossed. Near some salt springs, surrounded by a few palm-trees, and called the Wells of Moses, is the spot where it is said they crossed. The scenery through the whole of our route to Mount Sinai was of the most sublime and awful description, so much so, that I do not know what to liken it to; imagine rocks piled on rocks, such as Martin would paint, but totally destitute of all verdure, and of a dark chocolate colour, also polished so as to reflect the rays of the sun, and to scorch the face and hands of the traveller exposed to their influence—in short, a most horrid scene of desolation, and accounting for the murmuring and discontent which broke out among the unhappy Israelites whilst perishing of thirst and hunger, and reflecting on the land of plenty they had left behind them. On the night of the seventh day from leaving Suez, we made the convent of St Catherine, situated on the heights of Mount Sinai, and built on the spot where God appeared to Moses in the burning bush. This convent, situated amongst the lawless tribes of Arabs, may be called a fortress, surrounded by strong walls, along the top of which are mounted several pieces of cannon, the only access being by a rope, which is lowered from a great height in the wall, and up which you are raised by a windlass. Night had closed in long before we reached the convent; and had you seen us drawn up one by one, dangling midway betwixt heaven and earth, whilst the Greek monks, in their picturesque costume and long beards, held a glimmering light overhead, just sufficient to light up the countenances of the wild group below, you would have agreed with me that if such a scene could have been transferred to canvass, it would have created more interest, at least in point of novelty, than any picture that has been painted in England for many a day. On landing inside, our reception by the hospitable monks was every thing that could be desired. Here we staid some days, ascending to the summit of the mountain, and visiting some of the most extraordinary scenery perhaps in the world, as respects real grandeur, and far surpassing all others in point of moral interest.

After a stay of a few days, we continued our journey through the wilderness of Sinai, riding about ten hours a-day, and encamping at night, and suffering nothing except from thirst and a scarcity of water, our supply having failed long before reaching the springs of Akaba. I enjoyed the excursion very much. Akaba is a small fortress at the extremity of the gulf of that name on the Red Sea, and is merely kept for the protection of the pilgrims that yearly leave Egypt on their way to Mekka. Here we left our friendly Arabs, and had to engage with a tribe of rather a different character. Having to wait some time until a messenger was dispatched into the mountains for the chief of the tribe that was to conduct us to Petra, I had abundance of opportunity of seeing the Bedouins 'at home.' At length, after considerable delay, and some vexation in consequence of the exorbitant charges made for the journey, our arrangements were completed, and we set out with the intent of proceeding by way of Petra to Hebron in Syria. We commenced our march, following what is supposed [and supposed erroneously] to be the ancient bed of the Jordan previous to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Thus our route continued for about a week or eight days, during which we visited the encampment of our guides. Having approached Gebel Hor, or Mount Hor, on which Aaron was buried, we struck into the mountains, in the bosom of which lies Petra, the stronghold of the ancient Edomites, which was first visited in modern times by the celebrated traveller Burckhardt, and afterwards by Messrs Irbly and Mangies, also by Laborde, the only one who, except myself, as far as I am aware, has made drawings of this extraordinary city of past ages. I need hardly say that the visiting of it hitherto has been attended with the greatest difficulty, from the lawless habits of the tribes who have possession of this part of Arabia. To describe this place is impossible; therefore I will not attempt it. If I am spared to return to England, I will show you the sketches I have made, and then you will judge for yourself. Conceive a town with the most noble mansions excavated in the face of perpendicular rocks varying from five hundred to a thousand feet in height, and that to an extent of six or eight miles in all directions; the valleys or narrow ravines forming the streets, with lanes winding over from one to the other to the height I mention. The centre of the main valley had originally been occupied by houses built in the usual way, but repeated earthquakes levelled all in one common mass of ruins. There is now a city fortified by nature, such as never city was before or since, surrounded by mountains, the only passage of entrance through which is by a ravine so narrow at most places, that two camels could scarcely enter abreast. While the city was inhabited in ancient times, the hills around were cultivated to the very summit; there was a stream of delicious water flowing through it, and the population must have been immense. Now, all is deserted and desolate. The hills, though environed with a desert, still retain the richest vegetation, nature being unchangeable; but the only sound which is heard is the cry of the wild animals with which the deserted city abounds, or the stealthy step of the wild Arab, 'his hand against every man, and the hand of every man against him.' This is literally the case, for although strongly guarded, I did not complete the object of my journey without paying the common penalty of travellers. Fortunately our loss

was not great. After five days spent in making sketches of the most remarkable features of this extraordinary valley, we made the best of our way to Palestine, the most interesting of countries. Spring had now commenced, and all nature was bursting into vegetation. Waste and desolate as is the land of Judaea, nature is still as bounteous as in the days of her glory. In my wanderings through it, I have travelled from 'Dan to Beersheba,' and have never beheld nature in a more lovely form than in this once happy country, contrasted only by the utter desolation and wretchedness of her towns.

[Mr Roberts concludes by describing in brief terms his further journey to Jerusalem, the Dead Sea, Baalbeck, Tyre, and thence to St Jean d'Acre, whence, he says, he is to proceed by Malta to Spain. We trust soon to see the productions of his admirable pencil disseminated, in their usual accessible form, over the country.]

#### "MEMOIRS OF M. G. LEWIS,"

RECENTLY PUBLISHED.\*

WE have been much more pleased than we could have expected with these memoirs of Lewis. This gentleman, as most of our readers must be aware, was a rather conspicuous member of the literary republic of Britain during the latter years of the last, and the earlier years of the present century. He was born in London on the 9th of July 1775. His father was a man of family and property, and through a long succession of years held the post of Deputy Secretary at War under various governments of George III. The mother of the novelist was the youngest daughter of Sir Thomas Sewell, Bart., Master of the Rolls. Thus respectably descended, the subject of our notice, who was the eldest of a family of two sons and two daughters, was introduced in childhood into the higher circles of society, and continued to move in them through life. In early boyhood he was sent to a preparatory school, after which he passed through the usual routine of education at Westminster and Oxford, without signalling himself very highly at any of these places, excepting by his skill in recitation and acting. While he remained at Westminster, an event took place in his family, which afterwards gave occasion, as this work amply shows, for the display of many of the best qualities of human nature on the part of young Lewis. His parents disagreed and separated, never again, as it proved, to be re-united. Dissimilarities of temper and disposition constituted the chief cause of this rupture, and it was afterwards admitted by Mrs Lewis that the principal share of blame ought justly to rest on herself. No blot, however, of a serious kind, was thrown by this occurrence upon her character. Her eldest son was deeply attached to her, and his unremitting attentions throughout the whole course of her solitary after-existence, do him a degree of honour which counterbalances in a great measure the blemishes cast upon his name and fame by other circumstances. Lewis's filial piety is here displayed for the first time to the world.

It was at the very early age of sixteen that he first attempted literary composition, and we find, from some of his letters to his mother, that it was chiefly with the view of adding to her comforts that he took up the pen. A farce or two, founded upon French pieces, and a sentimental novel, were his primary essays; but none of these productions were either accepted at the theatres, or given to the public, in their original condition. He retained them by him, however, and went on composing and projecting, so as to acquire ease in writing, and to lay up stores of manuscript for future remodelling. In 1792, he went to the Continent, and in the following year, he for the first time visited Scotland, where he chiefly lived at the houses of Lord Douglas and the Duke of Buccleugh. In the summer of 1794, his father's influence readily procured for him the post of attaché to the Dutch embassy, and accordingly he crossed over to the Hague, and passed some time there. Being still "horribly bit by the rage of writing," as he himself remarks in one of the series of letters to his mother, he dedicated his leisure hours at the Hague to the composition of a work of fiction, in the manner of the Mysteries of Udolpho, which he unequivocally shows his own taste by styling "one of the most interesting books ever published." Lewis's romance (the title of which gained for him the nickname of "Monk" Lewis) was written in the very short space of ten weeks, and next year, after the author had returned to England, it issued from the press in three volumes, and excited such a sensation as falls to the lot of few similar publications. Part of this celebrity, or rather notoriety, was honourable to Lewis, part of it discreditable: we willingly pass

from a painful subject to one which is only trivial. Our young author was already a clever writer of light verses, of which the following, written upon the model of a well-known trifle of Goldsmith, is a specimen:—

POOR SIMON'S MONODY.

You ask what cause my tears supplies,—  
They flow because I'm weeping;  
Nor e'er shall slumber close my eyes  
Again, except I'm sleeping.  
That I poor Simon's death lament,  
No reason for surprise is;  
Oh! he had been a perfect saint,  
If he had had no vices.  
His courage he did oft display  
Where drums and cannons rattle,  
And never ran from fight away,  
But when he fled from battle.  
He was to speak the truth inclined,  
Save when he falsehoods stated;  
And was a friend to all mankind,  
Excepting those he hated.\*

Yet I'm disposed, I must confess,  
To think the doctors wrong here;  
The true cause of his death, I guess,  
Was—he could live no longer.  
These tears, which all my friends deride,  
I to his loss am giving,—  
Oh surely had not Simon died,  
He would have now been living!

Immediately on becoming of age, Lewis obtained a seat in parliament for Hindon, his father being anxious that he should direct all his powers to politics. But the young man's tastes were irretrievably turned to literature, and during the year following that in which his novel was published, he startled the world anew by the production of his musical drama of "The Castle Spectre," a piece which had a run of sixty nights at Drury Lane Theatre, and which continued popular for many subsequent years. This composition showed that the style of the previous fictitious work had not been fortuitously adopted by the author, but that the ultra-romantic, the mysterious, the thrilling, and the terrible, constituted Lewis's proper field.

Between 1796 and 1800, Lewis produced "the Minister, a Tragedy from the German," "Rolla, a Tragedy from the German," "Love of Gain, a Poem," "the East Indian, a Comedy," and "Adelmorn, the Outlaw, a Drama," all of which added more or less to his reputation, and were tinged in various degrees with his known peculiarities of taste. Numerous compositions came at the same time from the pen of Lewis, which were not published. One of these, styled "the Captive, a Poetic Monodrama," is presented to the world for the first time in this Memoir. It was performed one night; but its effect on the spectators was such as to prevent its repetition, several of them being thrown into fits. It is a thrilling picture of madness, almost too dreadful even to be read.

While Lewis was thus pursuing his literary career, he continued to mix extensively with society, and became one of its first favourites. A liberal allowance from his father enabled him to maintain a fitting place in the world. He paid various visits to Scotland, residing for the most part at Inverary Castle with the noble family of Argyll, who seem to have been particularly attached to him. For one member of that dual house, indeed, the Lady Charlotte Campbell (now Bury), Lewis entertained a feeling much stronger than mere friendship, although prudence seems to have taught him to suppress it. Inverary Castle appears to have been in those days a scene of the most refined intellectual enjoyment. Many persons of talent, some of whom now occupy conspicuous places in the world, were frequent visitors at the castle. Among other sources of amusement, a periodical paper, called the Bugle, was published weekly, and several manuscript copies were laid every Saturday morning on the breakfast tables. Many great names were attached to the contributions in the Bugle, though the most of these never were at any time set in types. Lewis was an important contributor, but many of his pieces were afterwards published, as, for example, the exquisite ballad or song of "Crazy Jane," which was suggested by a real adventure of Lady C. Campbell. Others of Lewis's minor compositions at Inverary Castle are given in these Memoirs for the first time, and we have much pleasure in laying a specimen before the reader.

#### THE ADIEU.

Yes! dearest girl, the time is past,  
When, rural pleasures flying,  
You seek the busy town, while here  
I stay, in absence sighing.  
But seated at some splendid show,  
While all with pleasure eye you,  
Oh! then on me one thought bestow,  
And wish that I were nigh you.  
Till summer brings thee back, my love,  
Of pomp and tumult weary,  
The heavy hours will slowly move,  
And all be chill and dreary.  
Fair spring in vain will boast her reign,  
And trees their leaves recover,  
While far from thee, it still must be  
December with thy lover.

\* There is some salt truth here. Many are friends to all mankind, except those they hate.

\* London: Henry Colburn. 1839.

"The number of songs and ballads which Lewis composed," says his biographer, "must have been immense, for he wrote a very large portion of the most popular ballads of his own time." Many are still popular, and when we remember such among them as "The Banks of Allan Water," "He loves and he rides away," "Crazy Jane," "No, my love, no," and others, we cannot but be inclined to give their author a high place among the followers of the very difficult art of song-writing. To his other accomplishments he added that of musical composition; and melodies, as well as words, were in various cases his own.

Lewis met other distinguished people in Scotland besides the occupants and guests of Inverary Castle. In 1798, he saw Walter Scott at Edinburgh, and it is mentioned in the *Life of the great novelist of the north*, who was then but imping his poetic wings, that he (Scott) "had never felt such elation as when Lewis invited him to dine with him at his hotel." As Scott's remarks of a future date (1825) on Lewis exhibit the foibles of the latter, as well as his personal peculiarities, they may be quoted here. "Lewis was fonder of great people than he ought to have been, either as a man of talent or as a man of fashion. He had always dukes and duchesses in his mouth, and was pathetically fond of any one who had a title. You would have sworn he had been a *parens* of yesterday; yet he had lived all his life in good society. Mat had queerish eyes—they projected like those of some insects, and were flatish on the orbit. His person was extremely small and boyish—he was indeed the least man I ever saw, to be strictly well and neatly made. \* \* \* He was a child, and a spoiled child, but a child of high imagination, and so he wasted himself on ghost stories and German romances." Lord Byron, who in later years knew Lewis well, alludes to his death in the following parody on two lines of Scott:—

I would give many a sugar cane  
Monk Lewis were alive again.

The "sugar cane" here has reference to the scene of Lewis's decease, which occurred on the way from the West Indies, and Scott, after quoting Byron's distich, says, "I would pay my share. How few friends one has whose faults are only ridiculous! Lewis did much good by stealth, and was a most generous creature."

In the course of the first six years of the nineteenth century, Mr Lewis sustained his reputation by issuing various compositions from the stage and the press. "Alfonso, King of Castile, a Tragedy;" "Tales of Wonder, in two volumes;" "Dravo of Venice, from the German;" "Rugantino, a Drama;" "Adelgitha, a Tragedy;" and "Feudal Tyrants, a Romance in four volumes," are to be ascribed to this period of his career. Almost all of these productions displayed the same lively talents and the same Germanised peculiarities of taste with his earlier writings. The *Tales of Wonder*, in particular, became highly popular. To his mother the literary successes of Lewis gave extreme pleasure. The affection existing between these parties, as has been said, was most ardent and durable; and whoever peruses the letters written by Matthew to his parent, which are given in the *Memoirs* before us, and which extend over the long space of twenty-seven years, will form a very high opinion, assuredly, of the writer's goodness of heart, and also no mean estimate of his good sense—a quality less frequently attributed to him. Circumstances occurred to expose both endowments to a severe trial. About 1804, the elder Lewis became acquainted with a lady to whom he would have had his son not only stretch out the hand of amity, but pay court in the humblest manner. Having been informed of injurious language uttered by that lady against his mother, and naturally disliking her position with respect to his father, the son respectfully but firmly declined to do as desired; he would only consent to show *no ill feeling* towards the party in question. The consequence was a separation between the father and son, which lasted till the decease of the elder Lewis. The latter, however, continued the allowance on which the young author lived; and fortunate this circumstance was for the mother, as much of the son's means was expended in furnishing her with comforts which her stated allowance was too small to procure for her.

The works of Lewis between 1800 and 1812 were the "Wood Demon, a Drama," "Tales of Terror, in two volumes," "Romantic Tales, in four volumes," "Venoni, a Drama," "One o'Clock, an Opera," "Timour the Tartar, a Drama," "Rich and Poor, an Opera," and a "Collection of Poems." Various were the degrees of success attending these productions. The original spirit of *Uranianism* or *Udolphism*—for Walpole and Radcliffe, in addition to the German, were the nurturers of his young tastes—permeated them all, and unquestionably Lewis must share the blame, with these his models, of having fed an unhealthy and vitiated appetite in the public mind for strong excitements. Whatever was the fate of our author's productions, as far as the estimation of the critics was concerned, the poetry with which they were largely interspersed was always admired, and we cannot refrain from giving another stanza or two that are new, we believe, to the public.

#### THE BLIND LOVER.

"Tis true, my love, of heavenly light  
These slightest orbs admit no ray;  
Dark are to me the stars of night,  
And blush of morn and blush of day."

Yet think not, sweet, the want of eyes  
Can e'er thine Arthur's peace destroy,  
While Mary's hand that want supplies,  
And kindly guides her poor blind boy.

Oh! when of loss of sight I speak,  
I hear you breathe a tender sigh,  
And oft I feel on Arthur's cheek  
A tear which fell from Mary's eye:  
Which when I feel—which when I hear,  
Not worlds could yield half such a joy  
As that one sigh, as that one tear,  
Which pity gives the poor blind boy.

Though knowledge hides her stores from me,  
And glory's clarions vainly call,  
In place of these, Heaven gave me thee,  
And, giving thee, it gave me all.  
And while of love I hear thee tell,  
And cherish hope, and promise joy,  
Oh! kings and sages, sure, might well  
With envy view the poor blind boy!

From the literary concerns of M. G. Lewis, we turn once more, to record the noble and honourable close of his mortal career. In 1814, he became possessor, through his father's death, of a large fortune, the major part of which lay in plantations on the island of Jamaica. After displaying the utmost beneficence to his mother, sisters, and all who had the shadow of a claim upon his bounty, Lewis, while caressed every where in society, and honoured by the intimate friendship even of princes, conceived it his duty to leave the world and its most refined enjoyments, and to take a journey, at once long and full of risk, in order to set his mind at rest respecting the happiness of his poor negro slaves. Unless one takes into account the extreme and nervous sensitiveness of Lewis's character, his delicate health and temperament, his strong attachment to his relatives, and his devotion to the pleasures of social life, the full value and merit of such a resolve cannot be appreciated. At the close of the year 1815, he embarked for the West Indies, and it is strikingly characteristic of him that he requested his mother on no account to write to him, nor to permit others to do so, dreading the effects of evil news upon his excitable constitution in such a climate. On the 10th of January following, he writes to his mother, informing her of his having had sea-sickness and misery for companions during the first month of his eight weeks' sail, but that the "opportunities afforded to him of doing some little kindness or other almost every hour of the day" after his arrival, overpaid him amply for all. His biographer thus describes the issue of Lewis's labours for the negroes. "So well did he succeed in his praiseworthy efforts, that the whole sable multitude of that part of the island began to consider him as their common friend, and the slaves on the neighbouring estates were continually making applications to him to entreat his intercession with their masters. Among his own negroes he abolished the use of the lash—gave them a fair and equal hearing with the whites in all matters of complaint—visited their cottages, and the sick in the hospital, to whom he occasionally sent the dishes from his own table. He increased their holidays, sanctioned their amusements, and became so greatly adored by the simple-hearted beings, that he could use no threat which terrified them so much, as to declare he would leave them." Having, however, determined upon a stay at that time of only four months, and finding that in that space he could not do justice to the whole of his estates, he resolved upon returning, for this very purpose, to the island, after having visited Europe. Accordingly, on the 31st of March 1816, he embarked for England, and, after a short stay there, went to Italy, in pursuance of an intention which he had for some time entertained. But the main period of this continental residence was spent in the company of Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley at Geneva; and here Lewis wrote a codicil to his will, which was witnessed by these great poets, and which made it imperative on the testator's heirs to pass three months every third year in Jamaica, that the "negroes might not be abandoned to the unlimited superintendence of any attorney or overseer." We may be assured that the two famous beings who appended their names to this document, encouraged their friend to the act by their advice and applause.

Lewis remained on the continent till the middle of 1817, when he returned to England, only to take a farewell (the last, as it proved) of his surviving parent, ere he again set out for Jamaica. Long after he had ceased to exist, a short work or journal of his was published, which fully describes the incidents of this journey. On arriving in Jamaica, after a voyage of bitter suffering, he of course went to view those distant estates not formerly seen by him. "My estate of Hordley (says he), which had been pictured to me as a perfect paradise, I found an absolute hell; the negroes were almost frantic from the ill-usage of no less than eight petty tyrants." The property was an everlasting scene of strife and confusion. By dint of incessant personal exertion, Lewis changed the face of affairs, and when he left the spot, he was followed by numberless blessings. As for the estates formerly visited by him, he found them in so happy a condition, that he declares "he could not have believed it" on the report of others, and that he would "leave the island with a heart a thousand pounds lighter from having acquired the certainty" that he had ensured the lasting comfort of his "poor negroes."

When Mr Lewis did leave Jamaica on the 4th of May 1818, it was but to meet a sudden end. Yellow

fever appeared on board the ship before it had been a few days at sea, and Lewis was seized with the disorder. To relieve an oppressive sense of weight at his stomach, a strong emetic was imprudently given him, and from this time forward violent retchings kept him in continued agony till the morning of May 14th, when he expired. It being improper to retain the body on board, on account of the danger to other passengers and to the crew from infection, the remains of Lewis were not brought to his parent soil, in which he would have wished them to repose. On the body being consigned to the deep in a rude wooden shell, with a white hammock sheet wrapped around it, and weights attached to the whole, it happened that the weights were disengaged in the plunge, and the coffin rose to the surface, while the wind, getting between the folds of the loosened canvass, inflated it like a sail. Thus circumstanced—before the eyes of the wonder-struck passengers and crew—this coffin-bark glided away from the ship, and was soon lost to their straining gaze. Where that boat of death paused in its course, has never been learned. So strange a closing scene was not unfitting, in some respects, for the bones of one who, during life, had revelled in the mystic and the terrible.

In concluding this notice, we cannot refrain from alluding to the ungenerous remark of Byron, that "Lewis died a martyr to his new riches." If any one is not satisfied of the real state of the case from this article, let him turn to these agreeable *Memoirs*, and he will speedily be assured that Lewis fell a martyr in the sacred cause of *Humanity*.

#### A FEW STATISTICS OF CRIME IN ENGLAND.

##### THE WRECKERS.

THE humbler class of people on the coast of Cheshire, Cornwall, and some parts of Wales, are, as respects the wrecks of vessels, as lawless and barbarous as any savage nation in Africa. They live partly by fishing and smuggling, but their principal dependence is on the plunder of vessels which have been unfortunately cast ashore. Their habits are described by all who are acquainted with them, as those of banditti; they put the civil authorities at defiance; they go in bodies together at night in quest of their prey; secrete themselves in holes and sandy hillocks on the coast as a precaution against pursuit; and in the case of wrecks being driven ashore, each seizes what he can conveniently carry, and makes his escape with it to well-known depôts of such articles up the country. Two circumstances favour this state of things—the utter inefficiency, not to call it by a worse name, of the resident civil authorities, and the insecure mode of building English merchant vessels. Our ships are knocked in pieces by a comparatively slight injury, the owners always preferring a clean wreck out and out to only a partial damage, because in the one case they are paid at once for the whole by the underwriters, while in the other they have a difficulty in recovering the amount of their loss, besides being put to a considerable degree of trouble. This is one of those "crying evils" which go on crying for centuries in this country, without ever crying exactly loud enough to force a remedy; and we only advert to it in passing, as a prevalent cause of the "wrecking system" on our coasts, not with any hope of being of service in bringing about an amendment.

The coasts of Wales and Cheshire, as being either bold and rocky, or beset with sandbanks, and lying in the line of navigation of vessels in the American trade to and from Liverpool and other ports on the west side of the island, are in the enjoyment of an extraordinary amount of casual revenue from the plunder of wrecks. Cheshire is spoken of in the Report\* as a great and busy seat of the wrecking system, which is profitable not alone to the actual plunderers, but to all that part of the settled population who purchase the stolen goods, such purchases being of course effected at prices greatly below those of regular markets. A storm from the west, accompanied with rain and darkness, is hailed as the omen of a fruitful harvest; and no sooner is it ascertained that a vessel is on the rocks, than the whole clan of wreckers near the spot are on the alert, watching for the anticipated prey as it comes dashing ashore. When that melancholy consummation arrives, all rush forward, like so many vultures, on the dead and dying. The bodies of the drowned are in a moment stripped of every thing valuable, and excesses of the most odious nature sometimes ensue. One witness, in alluding to the wreck of the "Grecian," Captain Salisbury, three or four years ago, on the Cheshire coast, says, "Captain Salisbury was drowned, and when his body was found, it was stripped of every thing; and whilst on shore waiting to be conveyed to some house for holding an inquest, his finger was cut off to secure his ring. The body of a female was also washed ashore; and a woman at Moreton (a village

\* First Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire as to the best means of establishing an efficient constabulary force in the counties of England and Wales, 1839.



in the neighbourhood) was proved to have bitten off the ears to obtain the ear-rings."

Apart from these barbarities, the scramble for property on the occasion of a wreck is disgraceful in a pretendedly civilised country. Mr Dowling, the commissioner of the Liverpool police, gives the following evidence of his experience during four years' service:

"A wreck takes place on the Cheshire coast, and the wreckers, unless prevented by the assistance of the police from Liverpool, plunder and do as they please. I have frequently had occasion to go when vessels have been on the sandbanks. In some cases we have been in time to prevent depredation, where the vessel has not gone to pieces, or been near enough to the shore to have been boarded by the wreckers. But in other instances, where the property has been floating about, and the vessel gone to pieces before our arrival, we have known of large quantities of property being taken up the country—for instance, casks of rum, or, perhaps, of wine. They would knock the heads out, and men, women, and children, would hale the liquor out with kettles and pails, and every thing they could get, and carry it up the country. So with bale goods, tobacco; indeed, every thing they can make use of; and such was the feeling of the wreckers, that if a man saw a bale of goods or a barrel floating in the water, he would run almost any risk of his life to touch that article as a sort of warranty for calling it his own. It is considered such fair game, that if he could touch it, he called out to those about him, 'That is mine.' That is marked as his, and the others would consider that he had a claim to it, and would render him assistance. Such was the feeling of the wreckers when I first came here. When we have been able to get over in time, our services have been effective, and we have on one or two occasions driven them away. In some cases there have been as many as 200 or 400 persons assembled in a very short time; on other occasions 50 or 60.

On those occasions have you been obliged to resort to force?—In some cases; we have not come to actual blows, perhaps, but the police always go armed on those occasions (it would be useless going without), and they are somewhat alarmed at the appearance either of the firearms or the cutlasses, and they have been driven away without actual force. In other cases it has been necessary to take men into custody where the depredation has been committed before our faces, and they have been committed.

Over what extent do you generally go?—We never have gone beyond Hoy Lake—never more than seven miles.

Have you the information which enables you to speak confidently as to the occurrence of wrecks beyond that, and whether the practice of wrecking is common?—Yes, I know positively that it is. I can speak generally I know it has occurred, and I can speak most positively as to one case in particular. A vessel, called the Hayes, was wrecked beyond the place I mentioned, on the coast of Wales. Every thing from that wreck was taken possession of by the inhabitants of the coast, and on an agent being sent down for Lloyd's to collect what property he could, he found there was no constabulary force existing from whom he could get assistance. He applied to a magistrate, who told him that he could not assist him in any way but by making him a special constable, and letting him do it himself. I believe there was only one constable, and he was applied to to assist. He was, consequently, sworn in as special constable, and from a number of cottages he procured some quantity of valuable goods that had been taken. There is a case I will mention where an Italian vessel was wrecked upon the coast, and before my arrival there, the wreckers robbed the sailors who had escaped from the wreck, and took the clothes out of their chests before their faces on the coast. That was within the district, within the seven miles I have spoken of.

May there not be even now, before you arrive, cases of plunder?—Yes, decidedly. If a decided wreck takes place, if the vessel is sufficiently injured to form a wreck, the accumulation of wreckers is the most instantaneous thing you can imagine. They see from their residences what is likely to happen when a vessel is on the coast. They look out for it, and they are there before we can possibly get to them. It takes us some time to ascertain the fact of a vessel having struck. We are not mounted, and are obliged to hire cars on the other side of the water, and go across the country seven miles."

It appears from other evidence that the magistracy of Cheshire, and such constabulary as they have at their command, take very little pains to repress these lawless practices. In the following case, mentioned by Mr Dowling, they would almost seem to sanction them. He refers to the wrecks caused by the dreadful hurricane of the 7th of January 1839:—

"A number of the [Liverpool] police force under the command of a superintendent named Quick, who had formerly been in the metropolitan police force, were sent over to the Cheshire coast with a view of assisting in saving life and property. I think about twenty men went over. There were a number of vessels on shore, from which very valuable property had floated and been driven on shore. The wreckers, as usual, came down in great numbers; the arrival of the police of course caused them to retire. Some of them, however, to the number of twenty-five, were taken prisoners by the police; most of them were caught in the act of opening and plundering the bales and cases that floated on shore. As soon as an opportunity occurred, they were taken before the Cheshire magistrates, three of whom were assembled to meet the charges. One of the magistrates exclaimed, 'Holloa, holloa, Liverpool police here! What business have you here? You have no business here; you have no business in Cheshire; what authority have you here? you have no authority here at all; we shall have nothing to do with you; go about your business;' and that was acquiesced in by the other magistrates, and something to the same effect said. The superintendent argued, and said, 'Sir, these persons were caught in the act of plun-

dering, and I believe you will find, if you will refer to the Municipal Act, that we have, as constables of Liverpool, authority in Chester, in consequence of its being within seven miles of the borough.' 'Oh no,' was the reply, 'no such thing; it is not the fact. Mr W—,' (who is an attorney, and the magistrates' clerk), 'do you know any thing of this kind, that such is the fact?' 'Oh no, I know nothing of the kind; the Municipal Reform Act gives no such power; I know of no such power.' However, the superintendent argued the question very calmly and properly, and induced the magistrates to remand the prisoners to a future day. In the mean time, the town-clerk of Liverpool sent an extract of the act over, and on the following day, or a day or two afterwards, some portion of the prisoners were committed for trial. They felt very sore about it, but still there was something like an apology made; not exactly an apology, but they said, in a sort of sour tone, 'Well, we find you have in cases of felony some authority;' (whereas we have authority in all cases), 'but still you ought to have consulted us about it; the magistrates here ought to have been consulted as a point of courtesy. Before you come into our county you ought to have consulted us about it.' In matters of that kind we presume that all the time spent in finding a magistrate is lost, when you have no specific spot to find him in. It would be so much time thrown away where lives are in danger every moment, and property too, so that the best way is to send to the spot at once when we have authority, which we certainly had."

Similar evidence respecting the plundering propensities of the people on the coasts of Norfolk, Suffolk, Sussex, Dorsetshire, Hampshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall, are given in the volume before us. In Cornwall, though considerably repressed by the interference of the coast guard, outrages on wrecked property continue to be perpetrated on an extensive scale. In one instance described, the wreck of a vessel near Penzance, "there were 4000 or 5000 people of all classes staying in caeks, drinking the liquor and wine, and plundering the property of every description—hundreds of women with pails, pots, jars, and other vessels, carrying it into the country in all directions."

#### A CHAPTER ON EPIGRAMS.

DR JOHNSON defines an epigram as "a short poem terminating in a point." The word is derived from the Greek language, and signifies to inscribe or write upon; hence we are to understand that epigrams derive their origin from those inscriptions placed by the ancients on their statues, temples, pillars, triumphal arches, and the like. They were very short at first, being sometimes no more than a single word; but afterwards increasing in length, they were composed in verse, that they might more easily be retained in the memory. This short and convenient method of expressing a thought or sentiment soon ceased to be confined to what was, strictly speaking, an inscription, and came at last to be used upon any occasion or subject; hence the name of epigram now-a-days has a most extensive signification. The fact is, that according to the definition given, nearly the whole of Pope's and Young's poetry, and a great part of the verse of the eighteenth century, consists of a series of epigrams neatly dovetailed into one another, and which, while together they form a harmonious whole, taken separately make good sense, and can be read with pleasure. The last century was indeed the golden age of epigram; but the latter part of the seventeenth was probably the period of our literary history most distinguished for this species of composition. The characteristics of this sort of poem ought to be brevity, beauty, and point; the latter consisting of a sharp, lively, unexpected turn of wit or thought, which concludes the piece. Such was the practice of the famous Roman epigrammatic poet Martial. The following may be taken as a specimen of this writer:—

Great Pompey's ashes Egypt's triumphs swell;  
His sons in Europe and in Asia fell:  
What wonder that those three so distant died?  
So vast a ruin could not spread less wide.

There is sublimity as well as fancy in the last line. Others exclude the point, and require the thought to be equally diffused throughout the whole poem, which is the practice of another Roman poet, Catullus, who imitated the Greeks. There is extant a collection of Greek epigrams by several poets, under the name of Anthologia. These, for the most part, consist of fine thoughts expressed with delicacy, ease, and simplicity. They have nothing pungent in them; but if they do not bite, they sometimes tickle, and always please.

A copy of the first collection of epigrams that appeared in English, has lately fallen under our notice. It is above a century old, and contains so many really very clever short poems, not generally known, that we have selected some of the best for the amusement of our readers. The original, of which the following is a good imitation, although not strictly speaking a translation, is considered one of the neatest little pieces of poetry in the French language. It was addressed to Cardinal Richelieu, who, upon reading the last line,

answered very smartly, *Nothing*. Here we find the point, the wit of an epigram, like the sting of a bee, lies in its tail. Louis XIII. is the monarch referred to in the second verse:—

FROM THE FRENCH OF M. MAYNARD.  
Sick of a life, possessed in vain,  
I soon shall wait upon the ghost  
Of our late monarch; in whose reign  
None, who had merit, missed a post.  
Then will I charm him with your name,  
And all your glorious wonders done;  
The power of France—the Spaniard's shame—  
The rising honours of his son.  
Grateful the royal shade will smile,  
And dwell delighted on your name;  
Sweetly appeased his griefs beguile,  
And drown old losses in new fame.  
But when he asks me in what post  
I did your wished commands obey,  
And how I shared your favour most—  
What would you please to have me say?

The impolicy of war is happily satirised in two lines. This epigram bears a resemblance to the well-known anecdote of the lawyer, who gave an oyster shell to each of his clients, and took the fish to himself:—

THE BALANCE OF EUROPE.  
Now Europe's balanced, neither side prevails,  
For nothing's left in either of the scales.

We can now afford to laugh heartily at the ideas which Englishmen entertained of Scotland a century ago, and even much later. Witness Churchill's poem, "the Prophecy of Famine," and Johnson's many sarcastic remarks. Multitudes of smaller creatures also made it the butt of their clumsy ridicule. We select the following piece chiefly on account of its brevity:—

ON SCOTLAND.  
Had Cain been Scot, heaven would have changed his doom,  
Not forced to wander—but condemned to home.

The industry of seventy years, pursued under favourable circumstances, has, we suspect, disqualified our country, in some measure, for being a fit residence for the first murderer. The Welsh were also favourite subjects of ridicule with the Sassenach. The venom in the sting of what follows is not very virulent:—

A Welshman and an Englishman disputed,  
Which of their lands maintained the greatest state;  
The Englishman the Welshman quite confuted,  
The Welshman yet would not his vaunts abate.  
"Tan coeks," quoth he, "in Wales, one wedding sees;"  
"Ay," quoth the other, "each man tastes his cheese."

Of all the men ever blasted with poetic fire, Sir Richard Blackmore was the one most persecuted for his verses. He was absolutely like a person in the pillory; all sorts of unclean things were thrown at him by all sorts of persons. He must have been a man of the most dauntless courage, and have stood always on the very best terms with himself, else he never could have sustained such a furious bombardment of lampoons, epigrams, and all that kind of thing. The publication of his dismal epic of "King Arthur," seems to have thrown the whole herd of versifiers into a sort of phrenzy. They appear entirely at a loss for terms of abuse sufficiently gross to pelt the unhappy author with. "Prince Arthur," in ten books, was his first offence; "King Arthur" in twelve, more than doubled the provocation, and "A Satire on Wit" carried it beyond all bounds of endurance. The malignity of the wits of that day rose to a pitch of delirium unprecedented in the history of literature, and, led on by Dryden, his professed adversary, the assault was terrific. But Sir Richard did not live in a glass house. The envenomed shafts recoiled harmless from the brazen armour of self-esteem by which he was most fortunately protected. We select not the best, but the least objectionable, of the many epigrams of which he was the subject. It is well known that Blackmore was a physician:—

TO SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE.  
I charge thee, Knight, in great Apollo's name,  
If thou'rt not dead to all reproach and shame,  
Either thy rhymes or physic to disclaim.  
Both are too much one feeble brain to rack;  
Besides, the bard will soon upon the quack;  
Such shoals of readers thy cursed fustian kill.  
Thou'lt scarce leave one alive to take thy pill.

Colley Cibber was another unhappy victim of lampoon. Many were the shafts levelled at his devoted head, which was adorned with the laureate wreath of the day. That a person so utterly divested of poetical talents should have been elevated to that dignity, was certainly no ordinary provocation, but it was the reward of what was deemed great service done to government. It was the "Nonjuror," a play directed against Jacobites, by which he acquired the place of poet laureate, and the enmity of Pope, who enthroned him monarch of the empire of Dulness in his Duciad. But the other qualities of Cibber were not such as to entitle him to this "bad eminence." His comedy of the "Provoked Husband," written in conjunction with Sir John Vanburgh, will live as long as there is a stage to act it upon. From a formidable accumulation of epigrams on him, we select two:—

ON COLLEY CIBBER.  
In merry old England it once was a rule,  
The king had his poet and also his fool;  
But now ver's so frugal, I'd have you to know it,  
That Cibber can serve both for fool and for poet.

AGAIN.  
What different effects does the laurel produce,  
In its bough there is honour, but death in its juice;  
Since Cibber has lunched its honour so low,  
He should taste of the juice, for abusing the bough.  
It is well known why Pope gibbeted so many like

\* Henry IV.

very small deer in his immortal satire : he had himself suffered in various ways from lampoons, epigrams, and libels, of every form and name. His personal defects were a broad mark ; so was his Toryism. Not content, however, with these subjects as food for ridicule, his enemies attacked him in his intellectual and moral capacity. But here he was invulnerable. The following is a specimen of the skirmishing which he sustained :—

ON MR POPE.

Pride is his pity, artifice his praise,  
A mask his virtue, and his fame a bias;  
Insult his charity, his friendship fear,  
And nothing but his vanity sincere.

With these calumnious lines, let the following very clever poem pair off. The last verse is eminently happy :—

TO POPE.

While malice, Pope, denies thy page  
Its own celestial fire ;  
While critics, and while bards, in rage,  
Admiring, won't admire ;  
While wayward pens thy worth assail,  
And envious tongues decry,  
These times, though many a friend bewail,  
These times bewail not I.  
But when the world's loud praise is thine,  
And spleen no more shall blame ;  
When with thy Homer thou wilt shine,  
In one established fame ;  
When none shall rail, and every lay  
Devote a wreath to thee ;  
The day (for come it will) that day  
Shall I lament to see.

The following on the same is likewise extremely clever :—

TO MR POPE.

The crow's rook, and pert jack-daw,  
(Though neither birds of moral kind)  
Yet serve, if hanged, or stuff'd with straw,  
To show us which way blows the wind.  
Thus dirty knaves, or chattering fools,  
Strung up by dozens in thy lay,  
Teach none by half than Dennis' rules,  
And point instruction every way.  
With Egypt's art thy pen may strive :  
One potent drop let this but shed ;  
And every rogue that stunk alive,  
Becomes a precious mummy dead.

Pope was made of "penetrable stuff," and quivered beneath the lash of censure, however contemptible the person might be who administered it. But his friend, the Dean, was all armed in panoply of tempered steel, from which the darts cast by the small wits of Queen Anne's day rebounded like hailstones from a rock. He towered above the herd of little men in proud and solitary grandeur, and scowled down upon them in ineffable scorn, like his own Gulliver amongst the Lilliputians. However, the following was, no doubt, intended for a compliment :—

ON DEAN SWIFT'S INTENDING HIS FORTUNE TO BUILD A MADHOUSE.

To madness Swift bequeaths his whole estate ;  
Why should we wonder ?—Swift is right in that :  
For 'tis a rule, as all our lawyers know,  
Men's fortune to the next of kin should go ;  
And 'tis as sure, unless old bards have lied,  
Great wits to madness are most near allied.

A rumour to the above effect was prevalent long prior to the Dean's death. Indeed, he himself gave publicity to his intention in the witty and sarcastic effusion which he wrote on his own death. Many will recollect the following lines :—

He gave the little wealth he had  
To build a house for fools and mad ;  
To show, by one satiric touch,  
No nation wanted it so much.

Charles II. was fair game for lampooners ; we select one specimen of the invective with which he was assailed. It is clever—bitter—just :—

ON CHARLES II.

Chaste, prudent, pious Charles the Second,  
The miracle of thy restoration,  
May like to that of quails be reckoned,  
Rained on the Israelitish nation ;  
The wished-for blessing from heaven sent  
Became their curse and punishment.

We find a great number of epigrams in which the prettiest of the thought borders on hyperbole. The following are ingenious, if not beautiful :—

ON A LADY STUNG BY A BEE.

To heal the wound a bee had made  
Upon my Delia's face,  
Its honey to the part she laid,  
And bade me kiss the place.  
Pleased, I obeyed, and from the wound  
Sucked both the sweet and smart :—  
The honey on my lips I found—  
The sting went thro' my heart.

ON SOME SNOW THAT MELTED ON A LADY'S BREAST.

Those envious flakes came down in haste  
To prove her breast less fair ;  
But, grieved to find themselves surpassed,  
Dissolved into a tear.

FROM MARTIAL.

A drop of amber from a poplar plant,  
Fell unexpected, and embalmed an ant ;  
The little insect we so much condemn  
Is, from a worthless ant, become a gem.

The application of the above is obvious, and it probably suggested to Pope his celebrated lines on the commentators of Shakspeare and Milton :—

Pretty ! in amber to observe the forms  
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms ! &c.

Most fulsome was the incense of flattery offered to the superlative vanity of Sir Godfrey Kneller, the painter. The following is pretty free from that taint ; and we give it, as well on account of its own intrinsic

merits, as to introduce another, containing a similar idea, but much more forcibly expressed :—

ON SIR GODFREY KNELLER DRAWING LADY HYDE'S PICTURE.

The Cyprian queen drawn by Apelles' hand,  
Of perfect beauty did the pattern stand ;  
But then bright nymphs from every part of Greece  
Did all contribute to adorn the piece ;  
From each a several charm the painter took,  
(For no one mortal so divine could look :)  
But happier Kneller, fate presents to you,  
In one that finished beauty which he drew.  
But oh ! take heed, for vast is the design,  
And madness 'twere for any hand but thine :  
For mocking thunder bold Salmoeneus dies ;  
And 'tis as rash to imitate her eyes.

TO A PAINTER DRAWING A LADY'S PICTURE.

He\* who great Jove's artillery aped so well,  
By real thunder and true lightning fell :  
How then durst thou, with equal danger, try  
To counterfeit the lightning of her eye ?  
Painter, desist, or soon th' event will prove,  
That Love's as jealous of his arms as Jove.

And with this rather-than-otherwise pleasing hyperbole, we shall close our quotations from the original "Collection of Epigrams."

\* Salmoeneus.

## SCRAPS FROM AMERICAN PAPERS,

AS COLLECTED IN THE NEW YORK MIRROR.

### WHISKERS AND LONG HAIR.

A letter from Paris states, that to be a fashionable young man in that metropolis, you must wear your hair falling in massive locks upon your shoulders—your beard must be in the style of Francis I., whilst your hand must be tightly squeezed into a canary-yellow glove ; part of the costume as decidedly characteristic of an exquisite aristocrat of the present day, as a red heel was in the time of Louis XIV. Thus dressed, you may present yourself every where—even at the Jockey-Club, the arbiter of *ton* in Paris at the present day. Our distant readers may not be generally aware that these delectable fashions are quite as much in vogue among our Broadway dandies as they are in France. Long hair, long whiskers, and a beard *à la Francis I.*, are all the rage. The derivation of this fashion of long hair is somewhat amusing. A young Parisian established himself a few years since in Cairo, in a business in which industry and perseverance would infallibly have led to competence. But our hero was impatient, and resolved to take a shorter cut to fortune. Thinking it no harm to cheat the infidels, he was in the daily practice of frauds, which, while they filled his coffers, were of little advantage to his character. At last his dishonest practices became so notorious, that the pacha was compelled to punish him in a manner in which all similar offenders had been punished in Cairo, from time immemorial. The youthful Shylock was nailed up to a pillory by the ear, and this punishment was repeated as often as his offences were discovered, until at length both his auricular organs were pierced with as many holes as a cylinder. Indeed, so obnoxious did he become at last, that the cadi, placing the gentleman's head between his knees, cut off both his ears with a razor. But the Parisian, in the meanwhile, had managed to transfer a large property to his native metropolis, and thither he followed it soon after the loss of his ears. But how should he conceal his disgrace ? After much reflection he leagued himself with half a dozen individuals suffering under a similar inconvenience, and they introduced the elf-locks, now so fashionable, and which effectually concealed their losses. Nothing could have been more fortunate. They all made excellent matrimonial speculations, and it was not until their wives undertook to comb their hair, that they discovered, to their horror, that their husbands had no ears ! Our fair readers must make their own application of the moral of our story.

### THE SILVER HOOK.

Doctor Franklin observing one day a hearty young fellow, whom he knew to be an extraordinary blacksmith, sitting on the wharf bobbing for little mudcats and eels, he called to him, "Ah, Tom, what a pity it is you cannot fish with a silver hook." The young man replied, "he was not able to fish with a silver hook." Some days after this, the doctor passing that way saw Tom out at the end of the wharf again, with his long pole bending over the flood. "What, Tom !" cried the doctor, "have you got the silver hook yet ?" "Heaven bless you, doctor," cried the blacksmith, "I am hardly able to fish with an iron hook." "Poh ! poh !" replied the doctor, "go home to your anvil, and you will make silver enough in one day to buy more and better fish than you can catch here in a month."

### FRENCH GAIIETY.

In the campaign of 1812, a distinguished general officer of the French army was severely wounded in the leg. The surgeons on consulting declared that amputation was indispensable. The general received the intelligence with much composure. Among the persons who surrounded him he observed his valet-de-chambre, who showed by his profound grief the deep share which he took in the melancholy accident. "Why dost thou weep, Germain ?" said his master, smilingly, to him ; "it is a fortunate thing for thee ; you will have only one boot to clean in future."

### PRECOCIOUS GENIUS.

"Marm, mayn't I go and play horse to-day ?" "No, child, you must stay in the house." "Now, look here, marm ; if you don't let me, I'll go and catch the measles—I know a big boy that's got 'em prime !"

### ACID CONTAINED IN ANTS.

Contrary to the once received doctrine that no acid was to be found in any animal, except as the effect of disease in the alimentary canal, many insects secrete peculiar and powerful ones. The fact that blue flowers, when thrown into an ant-hill, become tinged with red, has been long known ; but Mr Fisher, of Sheffield, about

1670, seems to have been the first who ascertained that this effect is caused by an acid with which ants abound, and which may be obtained from them by distillation, or infusion in water. Margraff and other chemists have confirmed this discovery. The subsequent experiments of Deyenx, Fourcroy, and Vauquelin, have ascertained that this acid is not of a distinct kind, but a mixture of the *acetic* and *malic*. These acids are in such considerable quantities, and so concentrated in these animals, that, when a number of *Formica rufa* are bruised in a mortar, the vapour is so sharp that it is scarcely possible to endure it at a short distance. It also transpires from them, for they leave traces of it on the bodies over which they pass ; and hence, according to the experiments of Mr Coleridge, the vulgar notion that ants cannot pass over a line of chalk is correct ; the effervescence produced by the contact of the acid and the alkali being so considerable as in some degree to burn their legs. The circumstance of much of the food of ants being of a saccharine nature may account for this copious secretion of acid, the use of which is probably to defend themselves and their habitations from the attack and intrusion of their enemies.

### EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE.

It has been observed, that if the French had been an educated people, many of the atrocities of their revolution would never have happened, and I believe it. Furious mobs are composed, not of enlightened men—of men in whom the passions are dominant over the judgment, because the judgment has not been exercised, and informed, and habituated to direct the conduct. A factious declaimer can much less easily influence a number of men who acquired at school the rudiments of knowledge, and who have subsequently devoted their leisure to a mechanics' institute, than a multitude who cannot read or write, and who have never practised reasoning or considerate thought. And as the education of a people prevents political evil, it effects political good. Despotism rulers well know that knowledge is inimical to their powers.

### A CAUTION TO PEDESTRIANS.

The following advice from the *Picayune* will answer as well for the meridian of New York as of New Orleans. It cannot fail to be peculiarly interesting to housewives who are particular as to the neatness of their domestic arrangements :—"It is sometimes very muddy in this city, and, therefore, some rule ought to be adopted for entering a house at such a time. The following, if not a good one, is very generally practised upon. Avoid mats and scrapers ; none but people whom nobody knows use those things. The entry and stair-carpet, especially if they are very costly, will get a good deal of mud off your boots by the time you reach the drawing-room, particularly if you dig your feet well into them every step you go, which you ought to do ; because it makes people think that rich carpets are every-day things to you at home. And should any mud still stick to your boots after you have reached the drawing-room, you may easily get rid of it upon the hearth-rug, by a little dexterity in handling your legs while forking your looks before the chimney-glass."

### SAVING TIME.

A clergyman who had considerable of a farm, as was generally the case in our forefathers' days, went out to see one of his labourers, who was ploughing in the field, and he found him sitting upon his plough, resting his team. "John," said he, "would it not be a good plan for you to have a stub scythe here, and be hubbing a few bushes while the oxen are resting ?" John, with a countenance which might have well become the divine himself, instantly returned, "Would it not be well, sir, for you to have a swingling-board in the pulpit, and when they are singing, to swingle a little flax ?" The reverend gentleman turned on his heel, laughed heartily, and said no more about hubbing bushes.

### A BUSY FELLOW.

The New Era says there is an editor down east who is not only his own compositor, pressman, and devil, but keeps a tavern, is village schoolmaster, captain in the militia, mends his own boots and shoes, makes patent Brandreth pills, peddles essences and tin-ware two days in the week, and always reads sermons on the Sabbath, when the minister happens to be missing. In addition to all this, he has a wife and sixteen children. The Boston Morning Post says this is not all—he owns a schooner, and came to Boston with a cargo of potatoes and onions, last fall, raised by himself, and gave notice to his subscribers, when he left, that the issuing of the next number of his paper would depend upon the wind—atmospherical and financial, we suppose.

### WILLIAM TELL OUTDONE.

In Northern Pennsylvania, some time since, a feat was performed in Ridgbury, Bradford county, which throws that of William Tell in the shade. A man named Lathrop Baldwin, with a rifle, shot an apple from the head of Thomas Fox, at eighteen yards' distance, arm's length. There was no cap on Fox's head ; his hair was combed down smooth, and the apple was a small one. Both were somewhat in their cups.

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